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SOCIAL ACTION

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HERE AND THERE

Babel Mood

The basic problem of political India is unity. Sardar Patel with his masterful sagacity and single-mindedness built one polity out of multifarious nationalities and principalities. With the sense of independence growing among the masses, cultural revivals had to develop and linguistic consciousness to grow sharper than ever. Mass education, electoral practice, social advance could be expected to develop trends which make for cultural wealth but also may threaten administrative harmony.

The establishment of the Andhra State on a linguistic basis is a clear pointer to future evolution. It is vital for India that it be faced squarely and treated tactfully. Language is such a basic cultural factor, so intimate a personal asset, so emotional a force that once a linguistic movement has gathered strength and acquired political glamour, it becomes irresistible. In a democratic set up, it outgrows administrative checks and cannot be effectively countered; political passion soon enkindles it into a wild prairie fire which it is hard to control. It is best to give it ample scope from the first and contain it only with wisely placed fire-lines.

The linguistic problem or rather problems of India will reach a maximum intensity in the coming years and will call for all the breadth of vision and sense of moderation available to all political leaders.

Free and Free

The press is free, ministries are free ; but parallel freedoms are apt to meet and clash. The press commands a certain number of votes (not easily counted), the ministries command a certain amount of advertisements. The ministries have the advertisements but want the votes ; the Press has the votes but wants the advertisements. Usually a tacit bargain is struck between both ; but it happens that the clauses of the bargain are interpreted in contrary ways, and a clash occurs.

How can one establish a standard of fairness ? A paper which receives government patronage is not expected to overthrow a government. It is, however, free to grumble ; even Mussolini conceded that much to reluctant patriots. On the other hand, a government which pays for advertisements out of the tax-payer's pocket must be mindful of the tax-payer's expectation that the investments in papers will be profitable, and consequently reach the maximum number of people (contractors, candidates for jobs etc.).

It is hard to pass judgement on individual clashes. But these incidents betray the sore spots of papers and of ministers. Often enough ministers betray in public the points on which they are most sensitive. On the contrary papers often enough pretend to be insensitive to anything except their ideals, but vagaries in patronage occasionally bring out their instinctive reactions to financial arguments. The sorry reality of modern journalism is that no daily or weekly anywhere in the world can do without a fair slice of advertisements. There was in the U. S. A. one attempt to shed all commercial publicity and rely on subscribers' support ; it was a failure. In journalism, outside finance and consequently outside pressure limit freedom. It is only periodicals which carry no advertisement that can boast of having the freedom of speech ; but then they regularly lack the freedom from want.

Doves and Geese

They called Stalin a man of peace. All the birds he ever sent in the air were welcome as doves by the flock of geese round our capitols; after examination they were all found to be bantam cocks with steel spurs. What is strange is that as soon as the man of peace had disappeared, real peace moves were made, by China and by Russia. They were responses to past overtures from the U. N. O.

What happened in Peking and in Moscow? Did Mao-Tse Tung resume his freedom of action? Does the fact that the Supreme Praesidium was reduced from thirty-five to ten - and that Malenkov resigned the party - secretaryship imply internal tensions? Or is it that the new masters want to gain a popular support which was waning at home or to recover favour with the electors of Italy and Germany? Or do they seek to isolate the U. S. A.? We may leave each expert to his own wishful comments on secret decisions taken at secret meetings. What is clear is that the Reds have started a new peace offensive (sick prisoners, voluntary repatriation of valid prisoners, cease-fire, etc). What the outcome will be is uncertain; what peace they have in mind is unknown. What is known and certain is that it is an offensive. It would be absurd to fancy that hard-headed philosophers as the Red leaders are, would give up their goal, with the death of one of theirs. Whether they have a Comintern or a Cominform, a fourteen-man politbureau, or a thirty-five Praesidium or a ten-member committee, whether they talk war or peace, whether they praise or blame anything or anybody, whatever they do or say, undo or unsay, in all cases and at each moment with any and every means they fancy, they do pursue their one and sole aim, i.e. to establish their communist dictatorship all over the world. They never show and will never show a change of heart; with them head and heart have been steeled into a monolithic block. Ye geese, look sharp.

A. L.

WOMAN'S PLACE IN SOCIETY

The womenfolk of Europe would like to foster a dialogue with their Indian sisters. This dialogue implies an exchange of ideas on the main questions of life so as to secure harmony of views and prepare a desirable cooperation. We ⁽¹⁾ in Europe, would greatly appreciate information from our Catholic sisters in South-east Asia and give due publicity to their views on the role women could and should play in the economic, social, intellectual, and political spheres of life.

It is my present purpose to set down for the benefit of India's womenfolk a few ideas which inspire our activities in Belgium and also in international organisations on behalf of women and tone up our efforts to defend, and emancipate woman and secure for her all that is necessary for her to fulfil her noble mission on earth. I will limit myself for the present to a discussion of the special role and duty of woman in social life. Your great and noble land, dear readers, is vastly different from our tiny Belgium, but it is likely that basic ideas are common to all countries.

Woman, because she is a human person as well as man, is born to live in society; to her society is as important as it is to man. For her also to lead a human life means to live

¹ The writer, Mlle Maria Baers, was born at Antwerp in 1883 and engaged in social work in 1908. She founded (1912) the general secretariate of Christian Working Women's Social Organisations; in 1920 she was elected president of the Flemish Working women's Guilds, and in 1927 secretary general of the International Catholic Union of Social Service. In 1936 she entered the Belgian Senate, in 1939 represented her government at Geneva, and was delegated to the U. N. O. in 1949. In 1950 she became president of the Catholic International Union of Social Service. Her legislative work is considerable. We strongly recommend her invitation to the Catholic Women Social Workers of India.

according to the natural law which expresses God's will, to lead a life which is free and contributes to the common good, that is to say, to the progress of mankind and the glory of the all-Maker. But man and woman are complementary beings. The common good therefore cannot be achieved except through their complementary activities. Hence the first object in view in our Catholic feminine social action is to secure for woman all desirable opportunities and facilities to pursue their complementary activities and specific mission. As it is evident that the human task on earth is not limited to procreation, it is clear that the complementary activities of man and woman are not circumscribed by those limits. Man is not created to be father only, nor woman to be mother only. Undoubtedly it is within the family that man's and woman's cooperation is most frequent and most deep, but this cooperation goes further and should be carried on in broader fields, in fact in all fields of social life, home, political assemblies, economic and cultural organisations.

Woman should take her place in all such activities ; she should give all organisations her womanly impress ; short of which she would fail in her duty and deprive society of a certain wealth she alone can contribute. This point needs stressing because it holds the secret of the vital task Catholic women of all countries must carry through in hearty co-operation.

We intend creating an international trend of Catholic feminism that will take the Catholic social message to women all the world over, message of sound emancipation, well in accordance with woman's personality and with human solidarity as well as in due reverence for the divine order of creation.

We plan a strong current, in consonance with reason and therefore with God's law, a current that will swamp away any age-old prejudice which hampers woman's mission in her personal dignity and social contribution but that will also

sweep aside the false egalitarian theories, whether individualist or communist.

These theories seek woman's happiness in a downright uniformity of rights with man and often borrow their postulates from an atheistic background. Egalitarianism cannot, in my view, have anything like a lasting success, but the appeal it makes to many should not be underrated.

Let us indeed keep well in mind that egalitarian trends necessarily tend to substitute selfishness for charity and solidarity, and the cult of the self to the worship of God. Were such a school to rally the mass of the women folk, it would greatly endanger our Christian civilisation. It is exactly what the communist school is attempting in its efforts to attract all feminine organisations which before all else seek feminine emancipation. Communism goes hand in hand with social atheism; in its view the role of woman and family is determined on an atheistic background. Were it to succeed it would bring the feminine world to atheism. It would be the end of women's faith, the wrecking of that devotedness and selflessness which are absolutely necessary if women will play their role in mankind. For the world it would lose all the spiritual and religious values women have fostered in mankind.

If Catholic women are to play their part in the history of the world and be true to their mission, they should learn and imbibe basic principles and live up to a living ideal which is as beautiful as it is solid and sound.

What exactly is this specific social duty of woman? What does woman rightly expect from society? What does society claim as woman's contribution to the general welfare? Woman rightly claims from society all the facilities to receive adequate intellectual, moral and religious training and development; besides this, she expects all necessary opportunities for her to play her part and make her specific contribution in all branches and in all manifestations of economic, social and political life on a national or international plane.

Society owes woman all that makes for the development of her full personality ; the purpose of this development is a sincere and efficient service of mankind in all its diverse manners. Woman in her emancipation and development must intend that very service and progress.

It is well to note that the noble vocation of motherhood is characteristic of womanhood and must mark out the whole range of her activity, not only in family life but also in public life. Motherhood and motherliness go with womanhood ; this is an indication of nature that points to the special aptitudes and to the specific contribution of women in private and social life.

Undoubtedly a woman in dire circumstances can do most of what is ordinarily reserved to men. But it is equally certain that women have definite aptitudes for special tasks which men cannot or at least will not undertake.

One or other woman can, thanks to exceptional qualities, address herself to masculine tasks. It would be wrong and unwise to plead her womanhood and debar her from such professions for which she is fit, even if her talents are rarely associated with her sex. Yet it remains true that in general women should take to the work for which they are normally qualified, this for the sake of their own happiness and for the sake of human progress.

We do not dream of limiting a woman's role to motherhood or of confining her activities to the family circle. But we keep in mind her motherliness and her family sense. Her vital role in marriage and in the family needs no stressing ; it is in that role that her greatness and happiness are at their best. Complementary beings as they are, man and woman, unless inspired with the highest spiritual motives, will find in conjugal life the milieu most favourable to the normal development of their personality. First of all conjugal society is directed to the most important task of perpetuating the human race, and since this is crucial for mankind, conjugal life fosters not only the progress of mankind

but also the progress of mankind's procreators. The development of the family, the rate of this development must be measured by this double progress.

The rate of family development must be guided by God's law and by society's needs and aim at the optimum population number, which normally implies a certain rate of increase and consequently the mother's physical, and moral cooperation.

In this motherhood with all its responsibilities and possibilities a woman will find her normal happiness and full development that will meet all her requirements unless she be deluded by selfish preoccupations. Whatever hampers this noble task of motherhood, whatever tends to lower it in public estimation, whatever disturbs its function should be regarded as inimical to human progress and to woman's happiness.

In the present crisis, owing to economic pressure or political disturbances, conjugal life, motherhood, family life are made little of and even combated. It is our duty, as women, to do our best by example and by organisation for restoring, and even prospering the family which is the basis of social life, the cell of society.

Nor does this imply in any way that the mother should be forced, or sentenced as it were, to carry out all and every one of the drudgeries which people but too readily assign to a housewife. A certain number of them are naturally associated with her role, a role which plays so great a part in national economy, consumption, distribution, even production of commodities and services. When all detailed contributions of this type are added up, they reach a total which staggers the imagination of statesmen and economists. But such tasks can easily be reduced, alleviated or even suppressed, thanks to the modern technical progress. The mother's and the housewife's burden can thus be greatly lightened, her work made easier and more human, and the freedom so acquired can allow her to devote more time and

more attention to the higher tasks of wife, mother and educator.

All these basic notions and principles had to be recalled in the present crisis when many so-called reformers pretend that there are more noble types of work and more socially useful avocations for a woman than motherhood, when they urge that it is more profitable to have married women becoming producers of goods and services outside the home than devoting their time and energy to producing and promoting the economic, intellectual and moral values which mark the specific contribution of a housewife and mother within the family circle. It is only after having thus pointed out the irreplaceable contribution of woman at home that we will be entitled to single out and explain her duty to society at large.

Maria Baers

THE HINDU MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE BILL

Such is the title given to the measure which is on the anvil, to be shaped in its ultimate form or perhaps to be rejected by the Central Parliament.

The full Hindu code discussed at such length in the last Parliament proved to be too big a morsel to be swallowed in one effort. It is now cut into smaller portions. The "piece de résistance" is the present one about "Marriage and Divorce."

When compared with the old project embodied in the Code, the redaction of the new Act shows technical improvements. The spirit in both documents remains the same. It is to a great extent a secularist tendency showing the desire of the State to act as Legislator in a matter hitherto left to the initiative of religious leaders.

It is easy to understand that in the face of the conflicting opinions of the different Hindu groups, throwing texts and counter texts of their Scriptures about marriage against each other, the State should try to find a means to put order. The deletion of the words "Sacramental marriages" found in the Code, and their substitution by "Hindu Marriage" is a proof of this spirit of secularism.

This more neutral formula is susceptible of two interpretations. The orthodox will read in it, and justly, that a Hindu marriage is what it was before, something sacred, a sacrament of nature; the modern educated unbelievers will not have to submit to a Law placing marriages among the "sacraments". Moreover it is a word too redolent of Christian meanings, which cannot represent the ideas of *samskâras*, which means: preparation, cleansing, purifying, adorning, consecrating.

The Bill is intended only for Hindus. We may be told that the discussion of it should be left only to Hindus. But after all, the Bill is before a Parliament made up of members of many other religions. It has a social import which affects the country as a whole. Moreover it contains some clauses which touch non-Hindus also. Hence these remarks on this important Bill.

First of all, what is the line of separation between non-Hindus and Hindus? The Legislators are not obliged to give a definition of Hinduism, which would be rather difficult; only to delimit those who belong to that religious-social group.

Positively, a Hindu is one belonging to or practising the Hindu religion. Even Jains and Buddhists or partial offshoots of Hinduism like the Sikhs, are classified as Hindus.

The negative definition is clearer: is considered Hindu, any person domiciled in India and who is neither a Muslim, a Christian, a Jew or a Parsee. Of course children of Hindu parents are considered as Hindus even if they be born outside the country.

However, the Legislator admits that if it is proved that a person, though domiciled in India follows customs as regard marriage, which are different from Hindu customs, such a person will not be counted as a Hindu. Such would seem to be at first sight, the case of the Adibasis, at least most of them. They are not Hindus. The Vedas, the caste system with the Brahmin priesthood, high metaphysical speculations, are foreign to them. They are animists, for the most part, with religious beliefs and customs very different from those of popular Hinduism. As regards marriages, customs, inheritance etc. . . they are not ruled by Hindu norms. Even if in some accidental practices they have borrowed from their Hindu neighbours, often their hard task-masters, they certainly differ in essentials in their concept of marriage.

One cannot say that since marriage consists in the giving of a girl to a husband among both Adibasis and Hindus, the two groups are identical. To conclude from the similarity of an infinitesimal part of the ritual, to the identity of the whole, would be to commit a gross fallacy which any student of logic would be able to point out.

And indeed, nothing seems to be further from the mind of the Legislators than such an interpretation. That would be to force on the Adibasis the shackles of Hindu Law, and would amount to a kind of "mass conversion" altogether unacceptable to the Hindus.

Apart from this general question of delimiting the Hindu Community, there are special individual cases to be considered. Any child born in or outside legitimate wedlock when both parents are presumed to be Hindus, is considered as a Hindu. This is consonant with the old tradition dating at least from the Upnaishads when Satyakâma Jâbâla was accepted as a Brahmin, though it was impossible to get from the mother the name of the father. Further the Bill, like the Code enacts that any child, one of whose parents is a Hindu, shall be considered a Hindu, provided that the child has been educated in the caste, group or family of the Hindu

party. It does not matter if the child is legitimate or illegitimate; he has to follow the Hindu code if one of his parents belongs, or belonged to Hinduism.

Does not such an enactment suppose many axioms whose validity can be challenged?

First it is based on the assumption that in a caste or group or family of Hindus it is not possible to dissociate really the social from the religious aspect. In reality it is not impossible for a non-Hindu child to live and be brought up in a Hindu family, following all the customs in so far as they are not against the Christian faith. The proposed Act excludes this possibility.

It would thus debar a non-Hindu child from living with his Hindu grand-parents unless both parents agree that he should be a Hindu. The case of a Hindu parent, who remaining a Hindu out of indifferentism or for reasons of conscience, but agreeing that his or her child be brought up a Christian or a Muslim, would not be considered.

There are other difficult cases that could present themselves. For example a widower, who would be unable to remarry, and would, though himself a Christian, go to live with his child in his Hindu family, or even in the family of his deceased wife, or to send the child to either place, would have to bring up the child as a Hindu. This is a serious violation of the rights of the parents over their children.

We may even ask ourselves, chiefly in the light of some other articles of the proposed code, if the past tense used in the text, "belonged" does not go further than the obvious application to the child of a dead Hindu parent? Could it not be stretched to include also the case, when through conversion, the party previously Hindu, has ceased to be so? In that case, the child, even the infant, nursed in Hindu surroundings would be and must continue to be by this very fact a Hindu. In fact in another section of the Code, the Law would deny to Hindus converted to another religion the right of bringing up their children in their new faith and

would take away from them the guardianship of their offspring. Legality is not always synonymous with justice. Since the time of Creon, and even before, the rights of human conscience have stood against those ordinances of the City when they become tyrannical. Thus while in many ways the Bill may be considered progressive, in some cases it reinforces the caste and joint family tradition.

Less serious is the difficulty which could arise from the fact that the illegitimate child born of two persons belonging to the Hindu Community is considered Hindu. When there is public concubinage or when there is a public acknowledgment of the child by the parents, nothing is more easy. But what of the occurrence when one of them refuses to accept the responsibility of his or her actions? or when both parents out of shame refuse to acknowledge their connection with their offspring? How is it possible in those occurrences to ascertain the religion of both parents?

The Bill, going beyond the provision of the Code, states that not only the convert to Hinduism, as was said in the Code, but also the "reconvert" is considered a Hindu. Let the Orthodox Hindus discuss the point whether there is a possibility of a real conversion, or whether birth in Hinduism is not the result of Karma alone, and also whether there is such a thing as "reconversion" according to rigid sastras. We have only to note that henceforth conversion and reconversion have found a place in the sanctuary of the Law. Certainly the Aryo-Samajists will not be the only group to avail themselves of this provision in the Law of the country.

A good deal of the rest of the Act deals with the conditions of a Hindu marriage. The rites should be those of either party. This means less litigation about the legality of a marriage.

A Hindu marriage should not be celebrated if a person is (1) still united to another partner through a former marriage. Bigamy is an offence; (2) if one of the party was of unsound mind at the time of the marriage; (3) if the girl has not reached 15 years of age and the boy 18;

(4) if the contracting parties are not linked among themselves as Sapindas (3 degrees on the mother's side and 5 in the father's, including the person concerned as one of the degrees) ; (5) not within the forbidden degrees (parent and child, brother and sister, uncle and niece, aunt and nephew, children of both brothers or both sisters) (For the Sapindas and for the prohibited degrees reasonable customs can allow exceptions to the general rule) ; (6) if the girl is below 16 she must get the consent of her guardian : (father, mother, paternal grand father, brother, paternal uncle, maternal grand mother, maternal uncle and any other according to the proximity of relation with the girl).

The registration of a Hindu marriage is necessary, but if the absence of it makes the culprits liable to a light fine, it never renders the marriage invalid.

When we come to another aspect of the Bill, the one of judicial separation or divorce, we see in the main three groups of cases marked out.

A Marriages null and void from the beginning, as in the case of bigamy and prohibited degrees of relationship or sapindaship, when for the two last cases there is not a contrary custom. The decree simply affirms that there were no marriages at all.

B Marriages which are voidable, if one of the partner asks for a judicial separation. The word divorce is used rarely.

The reasons for a judicial separations are : (1) desertions for two years, and the Act explains that the 2 years separation must have taken place just before the petition to the court and when no undue delay has been spent before instituting the proceeding. A separation having taken place years ago followed by a reunion could not be brought about as a case for separation ; (2) cruelty rendering cohabitation unsafe, unless it has been condoned in any manner; (3) leprosy or venereal disease ; (4) habitual unsoundness of mind from the time of the marriage ; (5) adultery.

Those reasons certainly entitle the victim to a separation, the marriage bond remaining.

Again voidable marriages are those in which the marriage has been contracted below the age indicated in the Act, and when the consent of the guardian of a girl below 16 has not been obtained.

To avoid too radical an opposition of the Hindus, the Bill does not decree that deficiency in age renders a marriage null and void. It could have legitimately been added to the former list of bigamy, relationship within the prohibited degrees or of sapindaship.

C It is when we come to the section on dissolution or divorce that the list of cases which could bring about the dissolution becomes longer and calls for many reserves.

The first is the principle involved, unacceptable to Catholics, that a law can break a matrimonial union. Of course some restrictions are placed in the Act presented by the Legislators : except in rare cases no demand of dissolution can be considered by a court except three years after the celebration of the marriage. Remarriage is allowed one year after the last decree of the Court has been passed without the possibility of further appeal. But it leaves out the main point of contention, namely, to treat a sacred union which a human marriage is as an ordinary contract which can be dissolved by the law.

It is not an ordinary commodity which has been the matter of the contract ; it is the union between two persons, the fusion not only of their bodies, but of their souls.

The causes of dissolution are many : lunacy in the time of marriage, perpetual impotency, which indeed should render the marriage null and void from the beginning according to natural right ; possession of a concubine or becoming the concubine of somebody ; unsoundness of mind lasting, despite treatment, for five years ; absence without giving any news for more than seven years ; leprosy, refusal of marital intercourse.

We let our Hindu friends discuss the matter with the Legislator, but there is a point which appears in the Bill as also in the proposed Code, which interests us to the highest degree, namely: A marriage may be dissolved if the Hindu party asks for it on account of the conversion of the partner.

On what ground can the Legislator pass such a law? Cohabitation is possible, and though the Church does not favour such marriages, she accepts them in certain cases and under certain conditions. Religion belongs to the innermost sanctuary of human conscience, and all other things being equal (cohabitation, union, share of the expenses, in the administration of the goods of the family) one does not see why the marriage should be dissolved.

There is no parity with the Converts Marriage Dissolution Act of 1866 when a convert to Christianity has the right to sue the other party for the restitution of conjugal rights. If the other party repudiates him or her on account of the conversion, the marriage is dissolved. In that case the essentials of married life have been refused. In the Bill of 1952, which will be discussed in Parliament, even if the convert is ready to abide by all the conditions of the marriage, he or she is subjected to the penalty of seeing the home broken because there has been a change of religion.

The introduction of this provision does not seem to be consistent with the secular character of the State. It will foster the spirit of communal separation, and prevent the growth of social peace and harmony which are the avowed objectives of Indian democracy. This and similar provisions like those pertaining to the religion of the minor children of converts seem to have been introduced by the framers of the Bill as a sop to orthodox opponents. But it does not appear that such opposition has been diminished thereby. Parliament must choose between this weak opportunism, and a consistent policy of equal justice and fairness to all communities.

E. Gathier

SOME RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEMOCRACY*

Today freedom-loving people everywhere are keenly conscious of a very simple but a highly significant social fact. It is that, if democracy — the system of organised personal independence — is to preserve the gains it made throughout the world by reason of its victory in the last war, it must devote itself with still greater enthusiasm and effort to the much more painstaking tasks of winning the peace which has followed, albeit somewhat uncertainly, in the wake thereof. Having succeeded, to some extent at least, in removing from the social scene those forces that were actively opposed to its continued existence, the major obligation confronting it now would seem to be that of overcoming the negative impediments, so to speak, to its further fulfilment which yet remain in the way. The advocates and the exponents of this ideal of social organization have been released from the importunities of their restrictive defensive positions, and hence are again free to resume the opportunities of the offensive. Affirmative measures can become the pattern of action for the day.

A proper awareness of, and a due regard for the realities of the present world situation, however, combine to prohibit anything like a total transference of human energies from the weapons and the ways of war to the much-preferred paths of peace. No society may safely, even if it can possibly, overlook a terribly pressing characteristic of the immediate historical moment—namely—that viciously anti-democratic movements are on the march in sections of the world. But the practical necessity of thus continuing to divide, between warlike and peaceful measures, the total democratic contribu-

* Mr. J. S. Connor is on the teaching staff of Xavier Labour Relations Institute. This article is an introduction to a series he will write on "the furtherance of the movement for an integrated social democracy." -Ed.

tion toward human betterment need not seriously impair either the complete efficacy or even the various partial benefits thereof. It is, after all, one of the well-known facts of life that defensive action can be ordered in such a way as to constitute it a complementary correlative of an offensive drive. What is more, and coming closer to the exact features of the time in question, since the unfortunate circumstances which require this attendance to matters of a military nature are as yet rather restricted in their extent, it is still quite feasible to concentrate the major share of emphasis upon affairs of a civil kind.

In the midst of what amount to wars and rumours of war, no society can afford to assume an attitude of blissful indifference to the condition of its implements of physical force. Such a lack of realism would seriously endanger the social well-being. But when, as in the current instance, a full view of the world picture outlines a panorama of prospects for peace which are of tremendous proportions, it is evident that predominant consideration may still be devoted to rational and moral methods of social procedure. It should not be forgotten that the fundamental contemporary illness of society is of a kind which responds most favourably to non-violent, in the material sense, spiritually engendered treatment. In humanity and injustice, the critical diseases of modern life, can be more completely expelled from the social organism by intensely positive rather than negative forms of medication. Consequently, there is little or no excuse for the supporters of the personalized approach to social health failing to apply their remedies with relentless and resolute vigour. By so doing, they provide for the thorough recovery of the patient in the least painful as well as the most rapid manner. A well-defined and dedicated offence on the civil level is clearly the better alternative to, and by far the strongest assurance against the need for a military defence of society. And what might be the primary or main spheres of social life in which this restorative campaign by the proponents of personal freedom and responsi-

bility is to be conducted? It appears to be generally acknowledged that such corrective action must take place in at least three areas simultaneously, if the best results are to follow.

One of these is the political sector. Open affirmation and overt application of the rule which posits the supremacy of individual rights and duties in the basic pattern of governmental affairs has to be secured and sustained on a world-wide scale. Men everywhere must be introduced to, and prepared for enacting their roles in the mighty art of promoting the common welfare of their particular societies, while protecting at the same time the prerogatives of their individual welfare. Neither the location nor the exercise of sovereign authority must be allowed to become identified with any one, or even few sections of a society's membership.

To the extent that the power of control does become thus restricted, the germs of a serious political infection begin to thrive within the social body. Once started, the disorder is not long growing in intensity, with permanent disability being the ultimate outcome. The best guarantee against such a degenerative process taking hold of a society's vitals, is the maintainance of vigorous health in each one of its component cells. Every citizen has to be afforded ample opportunity and incentive for achieving the fullest realization of his intellectual, moral, and bodily capabilities that is obtainable. When such conditions of existence are procured, the ensuing state of a society's life cannot help but be virily dynamic. It is for the most part evident that a democratic political system makes extensive contributions to the practical fulfilment of this ideal. What does not always appear to be quite so easily recognised, however, is the fact that political democracy is in its turn an actual product of a broader democratic situation within any society. Whenever, and wherever democracy has first appeared on the social scene, it seems to have done so traditionally in political trappings. That is to say, it has most frequently

made its entry as a medium of state organization. This is not in the least surprising, when it is recalled that the order of popular control was originally devised as a means of checking drastic abuses of public authority. For nowhere more than in the sphere of government have social excesses tended to become so intolerably vicious. Nevertheless, a not overly extended amount of reflection is required on the part of an observer, to enable him to trace out the substantial connections which bind democracy in politics to its counterparts in two other areas of group relations. Unless progress is made toward a proper integration of these three active branches of society within the democratic pattern, the latter can never truly become a living reality.

The second sphere of social relations which must be impregnated with the democratic spirit is economics. In this category of group affairs, the accompanying line of activities impinge more closely upon the personal aspects of human living. The variegated series of undertakings which comprise such a division are essentially of a type that every individual must engage in continuously.

As a consequence of satisfying this inherent obligation, each person contributes to the molding of his own permanent character in a material and a formal manner. In one respect, he develops a certain positive, productive skill which usually tends to become a central element in his habits of conduct, and which likewise determines, for the most part, the mode of his contributions to the advancement of the common good. In another way, such a course of action secures for himself and his dependents a share of the objective goods and services made available by society, and necessary for the preservation of physical well-being. Viewed as a whole, then, the ramifications of this portion of a person's living experiences are seen to have very important implications both for himself and for the community to which he belongs. To a large extent they constitute the vital "stuff" out of which human society is made. If, therefore, the citizen is expected to possess a democratic inclina-

tion in his political affairs, which are, after all, only an occasional and highly specialized side of his life, he must get the practical "sense" and "feel" of this attitude, not to mention a certain confidence in and enthusiasm for the same, from a regular acquaintance with its features in this more routine and relevant set of social contacts. A nice awareness of the correct interplay of rights and responsibilities between persons and properties in matters of the market, is a most valuable aid to the formation of proper notions regarding the same factors in affairs of state.

The attainment of a democratic economic order requires, of course, as an essential ingredient, a situation or condition of mutual confidence and cooperation on the part of the various participants in the economic enterprise. There has to be a real recognition of and a rigid respect for the rightful position of the several sets of members. Employers, employees, and consumers, the primary components of the economic unit, should share in the exercise of regulative authority, in much the same fashion as do all sections of the political unit. The first two of these economic groups, as direct and intensive contributors to the functioning of the productive system, should have an adequately proportioned share in the specific direction of the concern. Employers, as investors of capital, and employees as investors of labour, each of which contributions is a unique and complementary co-principle in the productive process, should stand as partners to one another. The former would be primarily responsible for the material and financial status of the undertaking, the latter would exercise authority in all personnel and disciplinary matters. Consequently, the duties and prerogatives of management will be assumed by a coalition of the representatives of these two groups. The consumer, in recognition of his indirect, though none-the-less real connection with production, and his proximate as well as important position in the mechanisms of distribution, has also to be admitted to the councils of management, in an advisory role at least. Reorganization along the lines of such a pattern is bound to procure an effective economic democracy.

30 The third zone of social relations which stands in further need of the democratic touch is the one pertaining to culture. It goes without saying that, since culture is a concept of many different shades of meaning, there is more than a little difficulty to be faced when embarking upon a programme of reorganization or renovation in its regard. The basic contours of this sociological region cannot be drawn with the same degree of exactness as they are in the case of politics and economics. Supposing, however, for the purposes of this inquiry, the cultural zone is visualized as embracing the three main lines of non-political and non-economic human conduct—namely, education, recreation, and health services. What is to be said of the consequences that can be expected to follow for them from a democratic social order?

To begin with, on these points, it should be emphasized that the human experiences which transpire here are among the most highly personal and closely intimate of any that are found in social life. Not only are these activities bound up with the daily routines of every citizen, as was seen to be the fact with respect to economic endeavours, but they impinge, at the same time, upon items of the deepest concern for each one. Since matters of education, recreation, and health reach into the heart and soul of the social members, they constitute the really vital centre of the social process. Under these circumstances, it is quite evident that the cultural side of a society's operations determines to a large extent the political and economic features of the same. According to the manner in which a man thinks, feels, and acts in his informal or spare moments, so will he ordinarily continue to function when he is carrying out his public responsibilities. It would seem, therefore, that the successful cultivation of a living and a lasting democratic social order depends in large part upon the depth to which the roots of the system are sunk in the cultural soil of a society. Unless this social substratum nourish the plant, they labour in vain who seek to improve it. And what are a few of the primary sociological characteristics which indicate the richness of the cultural ground for these purposes?

One is the quantitative scope of the social opportunities offered here. What portion of the total population of a society are given real, as distinguished from superficial, access to its medical, educational, and recreational facilities? Is every member assured of essentially the same identical right to participate in the advantages rising out of these common undertakings? The situation envisaged by the implications of these questions is not one, of course, which specifies that the activities referred to must be completely and exactly the same in every case. The true relative position of the individuals involved is not to be one of identity, but rather a relationship of similarity. This entails a certain proportional state of equality between all sections of the population. The practical consequence of such an arrangement is to assure that everyone will stand on the same fundamental footing. Under the same circumstantial conditions, those concerned will be entitled to the same satisfaction of needs. A fully democratic society recognizes all of its human constituents for what they really are, namely, possessors of the same basic nature, with certain unique modifications thereof setting each one off unmistakably from every other. Therefore, the cultural opportunities which are established and provided by such a social order must be intended for the use of every one, but in accordance with each one's particular needs. In this latter connection, it cannot be overemphasized that the dominant standard for assaying the state of a person's needs must ever be that person's position as a rational, moral, and biological being. Factors of caste, class, race, and religion, if they are to be allowed to exert any influence at all, must be restricted to a subsidiary position.

Another very relevant characteristic is the qualitative nature of these social relations. Are they truly dynamic, self-impelled and self-controlled movements? Or are they rather only dull, driven things, more a product of external forces than the resultant of vigorously immanent activity? Manifestly, only the first of these alternatives is of a kind

that will be appropriate for democratic purposes. Unless a culture springs from and is maintained by a people themselves, it cannot be conducive to the flowering of democracy amongst such people. Two elementary social qualities distinguish this cultural life which is positively alive. It will provide for a sharing in the responsibilities of direction and supervision by the entire body of participants. Not only will the cultural centres be considered as focal points of service for the people, but they will be accepted as institutions consisting of and operated by these individuals as well. Furthermore, procedures will be developed and followed which somehow make it possible to induce capable persons to come forth from the great body of members and undertake to prepare themselves in more highly specialized fashion for the unique and most necessary tasks as leaders. In other words, from start to finish, the cultural mechanism will be an internally integrated and operated affair. Needless to say, the determinants of acceptability for action here, whether it be of the primary or the more advanced type, will be strictly in accord with those set down for granting membership. Mental capacity, moral stability, and physical stamina would form the core of the testing standards.

The contents of this very general analysis of contemporary social conditions may be said to indicate a sort of schematic view of certain courses of action which seem to be incumbent upon the devotees of democracy in our time. Unquestionably it implies that there is ample room for improvement, and hence a wide area for effort open to those of this persuasion who are frank in their appraisals, and earnest in their intentions. Politically, economically and culturally, democracy still has much ground to gain. While the contours of the terrain over which the advance must be made, in order to obtain the desired objective of a socially integrated democracy, are such as to require a three-pronged deployment of available strength, it is, nevertheless, quite evident that the major drives must be made in the economic and cultural sectors. For one thing,

there have been fewer democratic advances in those areas than in the political field. For another, consolidation of past democratic accomplishments, and initiation of new ones, in the sphere of public affairs waits upon the completion of similar progress in the more private phases of human relations. According to a report of a recent pronouncement by our present Holy Father, on the subject of the social question, he appears to have emphasized the need for strenuous action along these very lines. "The first task now before us in the Pope's opinion," says this report, "is, 'The overcoming of the class struggle through an organic coordination of employer and employee' "In the second place", he continues, there is need for 'the protection of the individual and of the family against the vortex which threatens to draw them into an all-embracing socialization.....' *

John S. Connor

INDIAN SOCIALISM

Among the currents of Indian public opinion, one of the most interesting is the development of socialism as represented by the Praja Socialist party. Social trends are liable to mimetism and take a distinct colouring from their background. It would be wrong, and foreigners easily make the mistake, it would be wrong to daub Indian socialism with all the hues and shades which mark out European socialism. Indian socialism, whatever it may have looked in its infancy, has now distinctive features which render it acceptable in respectable society. It rightly claims to be an heir to Gandhiji and boasts of Gandhian methods. Last year, its leader, Mr. J. P. Narain, went into a retreat of several weeks in a Ghandian mood of purification; soon after, he sponsored the Boodhan Yagna movement

* THE NEW CABINET AND THE OLD DEAL, J. B. Sheerin, C. S. R. ;
The Catholic World, January, 1953, pp. 242-43.

initiated by Gandhiji's disciple, Vinoba Bhave. One hardly fancies socialists of the European type going the round of landed proprietors and persuading them in the name of mercy and non-violence to surrender their domains to landless labourers. Recently he was invited by Mr. Nehru to discuss a possible co-operation between the Congress Party and the Praja Socialist Part. The pourparlers ended inconclusively. The advocates of parliamentary democracy little regret such an outcome. Official coalition between these moderate parties would have proved useful against communal and communist forces, but it would also have given the Communist party the glamour of becoming the official opposition party.

What is of immediate concern to us, however, is not the political outcome of the negotiations but the social trend they revealed. Mr. J. P. Narain published a 14-point programme and commented on its contents in his covering letter to Mr. Nehru and an interview to press representatives. For future reference we reproduce the programme, and add a few notes on some points.

Draft Programme

- (1) Constitutional amendments, (a) to remove obstacles in the way of social change; (b) abolition of constitutional guarantees to Princes and civil servants, etc.; (c) abolition of second chambers.
- (2) (a) Administrative reforms at all levels, including decentralization of political power and administrative authority; (b) reform of law and procedure; (c) summary and effective machinery to deal with corruption.
- (3) (a) Redrawing the administrative map of India on the basis of linguistic, economic and administrative considerations. (Appointment of a commission). Reduction of administrative costs by having regional (multi-state) Governors, High Courts and other top level tribunals and Public Services Commissions.
- (4) (a) Redistribution of land to remove economic inequality and exploitation. Preference to be given in all such schemes to landless labour and poor peasants. (b) Immediate stoppage of all evictions. (c) Suitable legislation to prevent fragmentation

and to bring about consolidation of holdings. (d) Abolition of the remaining forms of landlordism. (e) The rural economy to be transformed into a co-operative economy through compulsory multi-purpose societies. (f) State assistance in providing credit and other facilities to agriculturists; such assistance to be given through multi-purpose societies. (g) The State, as far as possible, to deal not with individual peasants but through a group of them organised in a co-operative or panchayat. This is to include collection of land revenue, a part of which to remain with the village as organised in the multi-purpose society or panchayat.

- (5) Reclamation of waste land and settlement of landless labour on it through village collectives. No waste land to be allotted for capitalist farming.
- (6) Nationalization of banks and insurance companies.
- (7) Progressive development of State trading (in key materials).
- (8) Selected number of plants in different industries to be owned and run by the State or co-operatives of autonomous corporations, of workers' councils fostering organisations of technicians and managers to provide expert advice and administrative personnel for state enterprises.
- (9) Unified trade union movement organised on the basis of the union shop. This will enable the unions to become socially responsible agencies.
- (10) Nationalization of coal and other mines producing important minerals.
- (11) Association of workers in the management of State enterprises.
- (12) Demarcation of spheres of large and small scale industries, and establishing, encouraging and protecting small-scale industries.
- (13) As a first step towards achieving economic equality in the country, higher salaries and emoluments in Government services shall be scaled down.
- (14) The spirit of swadeshi to be promoted and to pervade all walks of life.

J. P. Narain admits his programme is far-reaching, yet he insists that it should be taken in hand immediately and rapidly. "A great deal can be said for caution and fearing to create too many upsets, but in the balance, if one has a

definite political philosophy, one must act and move boldly towards one's goal. The move must be rapid and drastic at the beginning... If India fails to present anything but a pale picture of a welfare state (which phrase I do not particularly like. Gandhiji's and Vinoba's Sarvodaya is a far better phrase), I am afraid the appeal of China would become irresistible and that would affect the lives of millions and change the course of history disastrously." It should be noted, however, that "our approach to Socialism is not doctrinaire, hidebound or conservative. But we have our own ambitions and wish to start where both the East and West have ended up and build a society in advance to theirs (not in material wealth").

Out of the programme, a few points may be singled out about which the susceptibilities of Catholic readers who are not well read are more easily roused. First of all, it must be noted that the Praja Socialist programme does not advocate wholesale nationalisation and rejects the idea of State capitalism. "At present the mainsprings are in the hands of private enterprise and it is the State that subserves the interests of the former. The situation has to be reversed." Some industries may be left in private hands, small-scale industries must be encouraged, landless labourers must be given fields, etc. The mines are already nationalised.

The most revolutionary proposal is the nationalisation of banks and insurance companies. It is insisted on because it is one of the most strategic points of national economy. When one observes Indian conditions, one is forcibly reminded of the words of Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno*: "It is obvious that not only is wealth concentrated in our times but an immense power and despotic economic dictatorship is consolidated in the hands of a few who often are not owners but only the trustees and managing directors of invested funds which they administer according to their own arbitrary will and pleasure. This dictatorship is being most forcibly exercised by those who, since they hold the

money and completely control it, control credit also and rule the lending of money. Hence they regulate the flow, so to speak, of the life-blood whereby the entire economic system lives, and have so firmly in their grasp the soul, as it were, of economic life that no one can breathe against their will." One can well argue that this is one kind of property which carries with it "a dominating power so great that it cannot without danger to the general welfare be entrusted to private individuals (Quadr. Ann.)", the more so that in countries like India there is the danger of a "deadly and accursed internationalism of finance or international imperialism whose country is where profit is. (Quadr. Ann.)"

The dangers arising from nationalisation of certain industries are well known to the authors of the programme. J. P. Narain writes: "To my mind equally important with nationalisation is the question of management of nationalised industries and State enterprises. The tendency of the State, in other words, of the Ministers and officers is to concentrate all power in their hands in the name of efficiency. This cannot be but destructive of socialism. The bureaucracy is not interested in those values and nationalization might merely end up in State capitalism, which is a horrible prospect. I should add that from the point of view of production and efficiency, bureaucratization of industry would be disastrous. Efficiency and production would both rise if the workers were made willing and equal partners in the enterprise." Is not this well in accordance with the schemes of co-gestion or co-determination which register the most recent advances of Christian democracy in Europe?

Another crucial point which readily raises Catholic eyebrows is the abolition of rural landlordism. It should be made clear from the first that this reform which stands as high in the Congress programme should not be construed as abolition of private property. The socialist insistence on allotting fields to landless labourers and on cooperatives in agriculture and in industry is proof enough that they do not

dream of so inhuman a measure as the eradication of private ownership. They rather aim at a just and fair distribution of national income and national resources, keeping in mind the needs of each citizen and of the whole nation.

As *Quadragesimo Anno* says, "when the state brings private ownership into harmony with the common good, it does not commit a hostile act against private owners but rather does them a friendly service; for it thereby effectively prevents the private possession of goods, which the Author of nature in His most wise providence ordained for the support of human life, from causing intolerable evils and thus rushing to its own destruction; it does not destroy private possessions but safeguards them; and it does not weaken private property rights but strengthens them." The right of possessing goods privately has been given not by man's law but by nature; "public authority cannot abolish it but can only control its exercise and bring it into conformity with the common weal".

But what about compensation to the large-scale zemindars? If the end (fair distribution of land) is good, the means (expropriation) should be pure as well and necessarily accompanied with a just compensation. On this point, the 14-point programme is silent. In his press-conference, J. P. Narain explained: "That means it is open to discussion. Some people want market value as compensation, but to us rehabilitation compensation seems adequate enough. But that is an open question."

The amount of compensation supposes the answer to many questions. Is "rehabilitation compensation" enough (i. e. would it be enough to let the zemindar keep 30 acres of his land and receive an annuity for ten years based on a fair rent for another seventy acres only)? Or should the market value of large properties be paid in full compensation? In any case, even the Congress party never offered such full compensation and several impressive arguments are advanced against such a scheme. What of the

title of many zemindars? Did they not unfairly benefit by the spoliations of foreign invaders? Were they real proprietors, or mere rent collectors? Did they not acquire land through oppression, threat or other disreputable means? Have they all along paid just wages to their landless labourers or were they merely satisfied with keeping their labour force alive without ever considering that their sin did cry to heaven for vengeance? Should they not be made to pay compensation themselves? Undoubtedly a certain number show themselves merciful enough, possibly more merciful than quite a few officials. No one should dream of putting the innocent on the same level as the guilty. But who among them is innocent or has never fostered a guilty mentality of the others? In our view it is nearly impossible to answer the question.

There remain two fundamental problems to be solved. First, what is the market value of large estates today, with a red revolution or a red invasion on the horizon? Secondly, is it not a fundamental point of social justice for the State to begin reform by first establishing a just system of landed property? Does not the common good demand that first of all the property regime be such as to make sure that the national resources be made to satisfy the basic needs of the nation and so attain their natural purpose? Does not the question of fair compensation come only after having established a socially just system? If it is possible, and in the measure in which it is possible, expropriated landlords should be given what is their just due. Few people would deny this, but what is due? What is possible? Possibly one or other reader would expect the Church to express an official opinion on the amount of compensation to be paid. It is her duty to disseminate and interpret the moral law and economic life as well as any other sphere of human life should be stamped with genuine morality. Ecclesiastical authorities time and again remind governments and citizens to be just, fair, kind in all their dealings. But it is not for them to fix the price of houses and horses, loaves and lands. For such a determination supposes a technique

for which the Church "is neither suitably equipped nor endowed by office"; it lies within the technique of the temporal order which is directly entrusted to the State. It rests with the conscience of legislators to meet the demands of justice and fairness and to seek the common good of the citizens in temporal welfare.

It is likely that not each and every member of the Praja Socialist party agrees to each and every item of the 14-point programme. That was not our point; we only wanted to single out in all sincerity that its demands framed by its leaders "come very near those that Christian reformers of society justly insist upon." If we rightly interpret their views, they keep in mind the dignity and liberty of the poorest citizen. They introduce a welcome note of personalism in their outlook on property, industry, and management of enterprises; they are keen on village solidarity and opposed to soulless bureaucracy. They urge that as soon as possible (and their expectation that the possible may be reached early appears unduly optimistic) that "the distribution of created goods which is labouring today under the gravest evils, due to the huge disparity between the few exceedingly rich and the unnumbered propertyless, must be effectively called back to and brought into conformity with the norms of the common good, that is social justice (*Quadr. Ann.*)."

In other words, they want that property, even private property, be made to fulfil its social function. Private property implies personal administration and social destination.

A. Lallemand.

SOCIAL CHRONICLE

Teachers Strikes

Since this time one of the most important and spectacular strikes has been the one of the Punjab teachers. 13,000 left their classes. 4,500,000 hours of class were lost. Two causes of strikes were brought about: non-payment of salary overdue to the teachers, and increase of pay. The first reason has come about because the teachers are employed in the District Board Schools. It is to the District Board to pay them. But they had no money, nor was at first Government ready to advance them the necessary sums. Government took even the position that the conflict being between Local Boards and teachers it was not its duty to interfere, or at most it could act as arbiter between the parties. In the long run, Government advanced the money to the Board which in their turn paid the overdue salary to the teachers. Teachers were to be paid for the days of strike and there would be no victimisation for having taken part in the struggle. As for the increase it was agreed that it would take place at the beginning of the next financial year, namely in April. Shri Bhimser Sachar, Prime Minister, nearly reopened the crisis in stating that he did not yield to pressure in granting the allowance, and made no categorical promises about the increase of Rs. 5 to low-paid servants, and consequently to the teachers.

The strange attitude of the Punjab Government has not brought credit to it. This is one of the results of the struggle. The second is loss of discipline in the schools. Striker-teachers have shown the way to indiscipline. And ultimately the boys who had to prepare examinations have not been able to do so in a sufficient manner.

Now that the Punjab Teachers strike has been ended the U.P. teachers have taken this weapon to obtain redress from the Government to some of their demands. Among them the payment of the pay overdues appears as very legitimate. So also an increase of salary. Several of them

have been arrested while offering satyagraha. Hunger strikers have been forcibly fed. This is a move in the right direction to stop those kinds of manifestations. For the rest Government is up to now adamant. It wants to keep by all means its prestige and affirms that it is ready to replace the strikers.

Police Strike

Another major dispute has been the one of the *Madras Police*. Two members of the Police Association's committee having been sent to jail the policemen protested and refused to take their pay. C. Rajagopalachariar, the Chief Minister, in a statement to the press, confessed that some of the revendications of the policemen were quite justified. Henceforth they would get only one day parade a week, and would have a full day out of duty. If circumstances forced to curtail this day of freedom, the policemen would get an extra pay.

The right of forming an Association was acknowledged, also the one of electing the members of the Committees was granted. Also the one of changing the seat of the Association. They were advised to choose as President a retired Officer able and willing to take up this duty in order to avoid difficulties with the routine of the services. They are unavoidable if the President is also an active member of the forces.

The Association would be allowed to present claims and suggestions, but not to take up the defence of individual cases.

As for one of the most important claims, an increase of salary, the Prime Minister showed the empty coffer. It would be done as soon as circumstances would permit it.

The velvet glove had been shown conspicuously. The iron hand appeared two days later when the Policemen again refused to take their pay after receiving, exhortation to do so from Government and order from their association to

abstain from it. The recognition of the Association was withdrawn, 45 members of the Executive Committee arrested. Others followed them. In North Beach Station there was a scuffle with 8 constables wounded two of them being sent to the hospital. 183 policemen went into custody. 51 were dismissed, 81 were kept under Act 154 Cr. P. C. for prevention of offences. A certain number of actions at law has to follow.

Swatantra, a Madras Magazine, asks if the suppression of an Association is in accordance with the spirit and the letter of the Constitution and if there is no other means than preventive detention to insure discipline.

Happily time heals many sores and has brought peace among the keepers of law and order; Government on its part has relaxed its strong hold.

Sweepers of the United Provinces

Lucknow, Agra, Bareilly, Allahabad and of a dozen other cities went on strike. They wanted better pay and better housing. During 8 days they refused to work endangering the health of the towns. The strike was declared illegal. Act 144 came in to stop processions and meetings and to send some people to jail. Sweepers are necessary workers, the new Code of Labours will submit them to compulsory arbitration. Meanwhile the sweepers of the U. P. did not see any other means of getting their grievances taken care of. The housing problem is one of the most urgent ones. Those who refuses to care for it should go and live 24 hours with the sweepers to change their views.

THE REFUGEES' PROBLEM

The total number of refugees will never been known exactly. Eleven millions was the number given for India, and Pakistan in her turn claimed to have received 7 millions. Bigger estimates are at times quoted. Sri Jain, the Minister of Rehabilitation, in his annual report affirms that actually the total displaced population now exceeds 8,000,000,

out of which the number from East Bengal is slightly over 3,100,000 or roughly 39%.

Since the census of 1951, 540,000 persons have crossed over the border to take shelter in India. Most of the refugees have come to Western Bengal which now harbours 2,600,000 persons or 84% of the crowds coming from East Bengal. Though the flow has subsided and some went back to their former places in the East Bengal, few indeed, there is scarcely a week when some people do not come to India.

Displaced persons from West Pakistan are equally divided into people coming from rural areas and from towns, while in the East they come generally from rural areas.

The chief attention of the Government was for the last three years centred to the East Bengal refugees. The work of rehabilitation in Bengal lags somewhat behind the one undertaken in the West because it began two years after the former and it was difficult to have in the East a clear estimate of the problem. Besides persons coming from East Bengal often refused to settle in places outside Bengal. Leaving aside the sentimental reasons which all the same played a part, we have to remember that in Orissa and Bihar Bengalees have often be looked up as "foreigners" coming to exploit the country.

There are other economical reasons. While in the West Bengal rural displaced persons could be resettled at the cost of Rs. 1,150 per family, in West Bengal it amounts to Rs. 1,750; Orissa 2,100 in U.P. about 2,200 and in Bihar about 2,700, excluding the cost of acquisition of land. These sums of money are advanced as loans to the agriculturist who is not really to burden himself with the bigger loans.

230,000 families of East Bengal have been settled in rural colonies or in professions ancillary to agriculture. 25,000 families are likely to be settled during the coming financial year. Loans advanced for the purchase of bullocks, seeds, implements, etc., up to 1952-53 totalled Rs. 7.74 crores. This amount does not include the money spent in land acquisition.

Expenditure at the end of 1952-53 for the building of houses totalled Rs. 11.4 crores and the amount for the year to come is about Rs. 2.98 crores. The number of houses completed or under construction up to the end of December 1952 was 160,000. Two townships were also established at Fulia and Habraigachi and the Government in addition constructed 9,000 houses.

For persons in business and industry loans have been given by Government to the tune of 7.14 crores till March 1952 and provision for Rs. 3 crores has been made for the new year.

Employment exchanges have secured work for 34,000 displaced persons from East Bengal. Technical and vocational training has been given to 10,000 persons and 4,000 are still under training.

About 120,000 pupils from East Bengal receive education in more than 1,000 schools opened for them by the West Bengal Government at the cost of Rs. 28,00,000 a year. Grants and loans have been given up to September 1952 to 213 secondary schools and 117 colleges; it amounted to Rs. 34 lakhs. Total expenditure on education in the eastern zone is about Rs. 3 crores. About 38,000 unattached women, and children and old and infirm people are cared for entirely by the Government in hospitals or homes.

As regards Western refugees land has been allotted to 534,000 families who received Rs. 9.28 crores.

Out of some 2,500,000 displaced persons, 2,371,000 have been housed. More than 150 colonies and townships have been built including 22 around Delhi. Next year 30,000 houses will be built and Rs. 7.3 crores have been set aside for this purpose.

Eleven crores have been advanced to 176,000 persons.

Employment exchanges found work for 167,000 persons while the State took 80,000. The total expenses from the beginning of the movement of Displaced Persons is about 178 crores. This gigantic effort of the Government should be acknowledged.

The life in camp, chiefly for people accustomed to the freedom of the country, is certainly hard and at times demoralising.

People complained of the unhealthiness of some of the camps, the one of Charbetia (Bengal) in particular. 300 families deserted the camp and went to Calcutta. The camps of Bihar and Orissa, Ranchi, Gaya, Alwa, are relatively empty.

750 refugees sent to Cooper's Camp, Ranagat, refused to detrain before some promises were made about necessary amenities.

Round Calcutta, trains have been stopped by refugees. And squatters have taken Howrah and Sealdah as their permanent homes, started procesions and some of them resorted to fast to call attention to their lot.

Mrs. Kripalini voiced the complaints of the displaced persons around Delhi. Even the town of Nilikheri does not offer to its inhabitants the occupations they need. From Faribad town 800 to 1,000 come every day to Delhi to work as unskilled labourers. In the hospital not enough beds are found for T.B. patients.

Revolts took place in some camps, with firing and deaths at Jullundur at Yole camp.

In Bengal some cases tend to show that Harijans settled on land and working it for two years have been afterwards turned out by the Zemindars who got the profit of their work. Muslims also in West Bengal complained of having been at times evicted by evacuees. Government has been able to settle about 70% of these cases.

It is true that in East Bengal Harijans complained of forced conversion to Islam and of want of money to cross over to Western Bengal.

Lawyers and Doctors want money from Government in order to start practising their trade. For the Doctors, with the general penury of them all over India, and with the actual epidemics of cholera, the thing seems not too difficult.

Unluckily many are expecting too much from Government and would be glad to live on the dole system.

There are also misunderstandings. When people have settled first as squatters on Government land, the readjustment is not difficult, but when it is on lands belonging to other persons it is at times very hard to square the accounts. Even when they are settled on the land belonging to Pakistanis living beyond the frontiers, it is at times difficult to make the refugees understand that their occupation does not give them right of property. A law must be passed disposing the first owners of their right of property and it is the whole question of friendly settlement with the Pakistani Government which comes into question.

The New Delhi Lower House has passed the Evacuee Amending Bill, authorizing Muslims living in India to dispose of their property up to Rs. 3,000 without any special permission from the Custodians of evacuee properties.

Actually 12 lakhs of files relating to evacuee properties in Pakistan are ready but no solution seems forthcoming.

Pakistan asked Delhi on November 20 to scrap altogether the evacuee property legislation, and wanted India to do this friendly gesture before they could contemplate any measure of agreement.

Sri A. P. Jain, the Rehabilitation Minister at Delhi, could not, in view of the position taken by Pakistan affirm anything but his desire to settle the question of evacuees as soon as possible. Meanwhile he had earmarked 2.25 crores for compensations, in the present year to widows, old and infirm persons coming from West Pakistan.

The Centre has put aside Rs. 32 crores for the refugees, 3.76 for education, 8 for Governments loans and advances to the States which have received evacuees from East Pakistan. 7.5 crores for those receiving people from West Pakistan, and 2.5 for advances to business men, etc. . . .

The cyclone of March the 16th rendered 15,000 persons homeless most of them refugees. At Tezpur, Bengal, 30 houses have been destroyed by fire.

A point of jurisprudence has been settled by the High Court of Bombay. No share in the property of evacuees can be given before all debts have been paid for.

The Backward Classes

The refugees are not the only problem which gives headaches to the Ministers. The one of the Backward Classes is the second. Babu Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Indian Republic, on the 18th of March, called for a "New Deal" in favour of the Backward Classes. Political equality is useless if there is no remedy for the economic and social ills of the poor. The number of the Backward people according to him reaches 140 millions.

Remaking the addition, Pandit Nehru came to the following results: Scheduled castes 51,350,000; scheduled tribes 19,136,000 and 80 millions to be placed under the Backward Classes. So from 140 to 150 millions on 360 millions who are socially or economically backward.

Pandit Nehru told his hearers that he disliked the word "Backward Class" because it was difficult to judge who has to be included in them. Is it poverty, but 90% of India is poor. Is it illiteracy? In that case we come again to 90%. The clothes used, the ways of living are but superficial criteria.

To those officially enrolled under the banner of the "Backward Classes" the Pandit gives this sound piece of advice, "Get rid of the sub-castes and subdivisions among you. It will be easier for the reformers to deal with great units than with a multitude of subdivisions in order to bring them to the level of the progressive group."

E. Gauthier.

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2. To provide theoretical and practical training for social workers.
3. To serve as a centre of information about Catholic social works.

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